aroused curiosity among those oppressed by a sense of the ordinariness of their lives; but when authentic burglars and prostitutes and queens set about satisfying this curiosity, they inevitably assume it is directed rather towards themselves than towards their unusual circumstances. The average burglar or prostitute or queen, like the Unknown Soldier, is necessarily anonymous; and the insatiable thirst for contemporary auto-biography is due rather to a desire to experience vicariously the excitement of an exceptional life than to acquire information about ordinary people in whom the reader may recognise his like. Each autobiographer is concerned to portray himself, not as he is, but as he would wish to be—experienced and travelled, yet innocent and eager; fond of a kiss and fond of a guinea; given equally to piping through the valleys wild and to *wagons-lit>* tough enough to kill, and tender enough to love, and err, and expose injustices, and espouse righteous causes. If it would be idle to look for a burglar in *Low Company,* or even for Mr, Benny, it contains Mr. Benny's conception of himself and of burglary at their noblest and best. From the abundance of con-temporary autobiography dealing with high- and low-, but seldom with middle-life, a generation's aspirations may be deduced; all they would have wished to be and are not, all they might have experienced and have not. Like toreadors, Mr. Bruce Lockhart, Mr. Negley Parson, Mr. Vincent Sheean, perform in the arena; and the onlookers, lolling in their seats, sucking oranges, applauding, feel that they too have been adventurous, they too have seen men and cities.

This vogue for self-dramatisation has opened up a lucrative career for down-and-outs, convicts, and other former social outcasts. A term of penal servitude has its compensations when it may later produce abundant royalties; the prostitute on her weary search for a client may take comfort from the thought that one day her reminiscences may be marketable. Pockets which once had to be picked or left intact, will freely disgorge when a pickpocket's inner life is made available at ten-and-six net; those be edified who formerly had to be preyed upon, and